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## LOVE ME TO-NIGHT.

BY PAULINE PILKINGTON FILIER.

SECRET, what has the world in store for us?  
To-day all things look bright,  
But ever a cloud of dread hangs nigh,  
And the thought of a coming blight;  
In fear of what the years may bring,  
Love me, love me to-night!

If famine gaunt reigned in the land,  
And the awful sun shone bright,  
If after drouth of the burning month,  
Dark dews shed death at night,  
And I should die and you should faint,  
And your life lose all delight!

If ruthless death should sever us  
With his hand so cold, so white,  
And they laid one far from the other's rest,  
Nath the cypress slim and slight,  
'Twere vain to pray for one's return,  
Love me, love me to-night!

And if—Oh! direct pain of all—  
O'er love there came a deadly blight,  
At longings of the other's heart,  
One's love lost all its wild delight;  
Oh child, ere that bleak time may be,  
Love me, love me to-night!

Oh sweet, clasp close, this even may be  
Foreboding of some coming blight,  
That makes my heart grow chill with dread,  
And your lips grow wild and white,  
In fear of what the years may bring,  
Love me, love me to-night!

## Jasper Onslow's Wife.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU.

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

### CHAPTER XIII.

RALPH RUTHERFORD.

Poverty sits here,  
Craving a foot of your fair palace steps,  
For lack of better resting place.  
—Sheridan Knowles.

The two women looked at one another, wild fear in Muriel's eyes, and hatred and contempt in those of Doris Carlyn.

"Not a word did the latter vouchsafe, but beckoning to Jasper Colliver, she pointed to the heap of yellow lace in Muriel's lap."

"Is that my lace?" she asked.

"It is, madam."

"I would prefer its being mended by a respectable person, if you please. I am not in the habit of employing abandoned women."

"Madam?"

"Be quiet, my dear," said Jasper Colliver, for Muriel had started up with an indignant exclamation at the cutting words, delivered in Doris Carlyn's most cutting manner. "This lady is a little mistaken, that is all. I am not in the habit of employing such women as you speak of, madam," he went on, addressing his customer. "This young lady, or 'person,' as I suppose you would say, is the wife of my assistant. To home, my dear," he added to Muriel, "and tell your husband to be good enough to finish that estimate about the frames for Deepdale church."

He had guessed the truth from her face, and wanted to spare her further insult.

"Excuse me a moment," he said to Doris Carlyn, who stared at Muriel, and put up her eyes to stare at Muriel as she passed the door.

The maid who accompanied her—a new one since Muriel left the Grange—followed the example of her mistress, and stared insolently at "the creature," as she dubbed the lace-mender, whom her mistress had called "abandoned."

"That's the woman, isn't it?" Jasper said, in a low tone, as they reached the door.

"Yes."

"Ah, I thought so. She's a sweet creature."

"What shall I do, Mr. Colliver? If Jasper should see her—"

"He would behave like a sensible man, I hope, my dear. But go home, and keep him there if you can. I won't have you tempted in my presence."

"You are very kind to me, Mr. Colliver. I will thank you presently; but the sight of her has made me sick. I feel as though some dreadful misfortune would come to me through her."

"Keep out of her way, that is all. She shan't find out anything through me."

He went back into the shop, and Muriel ran home, her heart wildly beating with terror lest Jasper should have gone out and be on his way to the shop; but no such terrible thing had happened. Her husband was fast asleep on the sofa with the baby in his arms.

Thankfully she removed the child, which was beginning to stir, without awaking, and then sat down by his side to recover her calmness.

"Oh, if heaven's law did not forbid murder," she thought, passionately, "it would be sweet to kill her."

A burst of hot tears came to her relief, and seemed to wash away the evil thoughts of jealousy and revenge which had taken hold of her. Jasper slept on, and the pretty child in her arms cooed, and put up its little hands to stroke her face, and she was soothed.

"I am a fool," she said to herself. "My husband is mine. The glimmer of that wretched time passed away with the fever. Even if they were to meet, I have nothing to fear."

"Muriel, I thought you were at the shop."

Jasper woke and spoke in some surprise at seeing his wife there, and the reflected radiance of the setting sun shining upon her pretty face.

"Why, I must have been asleep a long time."



THE UNDISCOVERED GUY.

"You would have waked long before, dear, if I had not taken baby," she replied. "He was just preparing for a good scream when I came in."

"But what brought you in? I thought you were a fixture there for ever so long."

"No, but—some customers came in—West-end people—and I—came away."

"Mysterious little woman! What for? Did you know them?"

"No, but—Oh, Jasper, do you love me? Are you quite sure you care for me, and only me, now?"

"My dear Muriel, you are surely hysterical," he said, kneeling down by her side. "What is the matter? Of course, I love you, child."

"With undivided love, Jasper? Look me in the face and tell me."

He did look at her, steadily, and with no wavering in his eyes, and pressed her to his breast.

"I don't know what prompts the question now," he said; "but I do love you faithfully and truly with my whole heart. Who is it that says Heaven 'creates the love to reward the love'? Heaven and you have done it for me, dear girl, never doubt it."

"Would you love me if you saw her again—that woman?"

"What makes you speak of her? Have you seen her?"

"They mentioned her name—those people—that was all."

"And you were frightened, silly little wife—fearful for your husband's honor and your own happiness. Have no fear, my Muriel. Doris Carlyn in her most seductive mood could not make my heart beat one shade faster. The cure has been sharp but complete. Trust me, and believe me true, wife. I love none but you."

"Jasper, when I heard her name just now, I felt as though I could kill her."

"I did! I thought of the time when she pampered you to madness with her wiles, won you up to love her, and then froze you with a look—sent you to your death, had not friends found you out and rescued you?"

"And you the best of all, my darling," he said, little dreaming she had stood face to face with the woman she was talking about, and borne from her the bitterest insult one woman can bear from another.

"It would indeed have been death but for you, my Muriel; but Doris Carlyn did not know of it."

"And would not have cared, if she had."

"I think she would. Don't speak of her like that, Muriel. I loved her once."

"She was not worthy of an honest man's love—a wanton!"

"Stay, dear; don't belile her. Vain, frivolous, heartless, if you will, Doris Carlyn, might be, but not that. I believe she was pure."

"Do you? Rest in your belief if you will. I think men only see the surface; we women have farther seeing eyes. If it were not that Doris Carlyn's path and the pretty child in her arms cooed, and put up its little hands to stroke her face, and she was soothed."

"I am a fool," she said to herself. "My husband is mine. The glimmer of that wretched time passed away with the fever. Even if they were to meet, I have nothing to fear."

"Muriel, I thought you were at the shop."

Jasper woke and spoke in some surprise at seeing his wife there, and the reflected radiance of the setting sun shining upon her pretty face.

"Why, I must have been asleep a long time."

Doris Carlyn looked contemptuously at Muriel as she walked out of the shop. She was very plainly attired, in a close-fitting black dress with a white apron, which she had put on for the lace to rest upon. Her hair was growing very fast, and fell in bright curls over her shoulders, giving her a singularly youthful and spirituelle look. Altogether she was a much more lovable-looking woman than the Muriel Chisholm of Kingdon Grange, who had been at once her companion and her slave.

"I am afraid it is you who are mistaken, Mr. Colliver," she said, as the old man spread the lace open for her inspection. "Unfortunately, I know that person's character only too well, and as I said before, I should prefer to have any work for me done by a deserving woman."

"I believe my lace-mender to come under that category," was the quiet reply. "She is, as I said, the wife of my assistant."

"Has she sunk so low as that? Poor, lost girl!"

"I hardly call it sinking, to marry any honest man," Jasper Colliver returned, in the same quiet manner, "looking her through," as Doris Carlyn declared afterwards, "and I know her to be such. Will you kindly look over the lace, and tell me how much of it you will take? You will have to put up with the mender, though, unless you will take it as it is and get it repaired yourself."

"No, indeed. I could not wear it in rags—and I'm not inclined to take any trouble about it. I suppose that creature will have to do it. I'm sure I'm thankful to hear she is married, if she really is. You must pardon my being so rude as to doubt it; but of course you do not know her antecedents. How should you?"

"No one better."

"Indeed!"

"She was my companion—little better than my maid even. I took her in some sort out of charity."

"Indeed!"

Doris Carlyn's bitter spite did not let her see the keen, cold look in the old man's eyes, and she answered eagerly, with a bit of sneer.

"Yes; and she ran away from my house with an artist I had employed to paint my portrait, and who made such a horrible failure of it—having no talent, I presume—that I was really obliged to leave London to avoid being the laughing stock of the town."

"Perhaps your beauty blinded him, Miss Carlyn. Perhaps looking in the sunshine of your smiles took the sight from his brain, the nerve from his wrist. Such things have been before now. The story of Greece has its parallels in this nineteenth century of ours."

"Ah, you have heard the tale, I see," she said, with a hard, merciless laugh. "But pray don't fancy me a Greece, Mr. Colliver. I did no such serpent-like mischief. The man was mad; there could not be a doubt of that. But that's not to the purpose. This woman that you think such a pattern of prudence went and lived openly with him in his London lodgings."

"Dear, dear, how we may be deceived," Jasper Colliver said, with a smile. "But she is useful to me, Miss Carlyn, and I don't think I shall allow any one to prejudice me against her."

"Oh, I'm sure I don't want to," was the careless reply. "I'm glad she's found one shop to marry her, even a hanger-on in a shop. What is his name, Mr. Colliver?"

"I don't think it would interest you if you heard it, madam. The man who dates my bracelets and polishes up my carvings can be nothing in your eyes."

"Besides, my assistant is a broken-down gentleman, who wishes his whereabouts not known."

"So it is not Jasper Onslow, I care not what it is."

Doris Carlyn spoke the words half to herself, but Jasper Colliver replied to them.

"You do not know what has become of him then, Miss Carlyn?"

"No."

"Perhaps he is dead."

"I think not. I fancy I should have heard of it. I think he is hiding somewhere. I would help him if I knew where to find him. I could not while I knew that woman was with him."

She gave a few more orders about her lace and went away, leaving Jasper Colliver looking after her in mournful amazement.

"A beautiful fiend," he muttered; "fair without but black within—a creature permitted by heaven for the punishment of some one's sins on earth. That poor, foolish-minded fellow yonder has had his full share. I'm thankful no contrivance brought about a meeting between them."

"Miss Carlyn, ho, ho, ho!" Doris Carlyn! "It's as good as a play!"

The words came from close to the door, and looking out, he saw a man with a little child of four or five years old in his arms, sitting on the step. He was ragged and foodless, his boots were broken with long travel, and there was a weary, famished look about him that spoke more eloquently than words could have done of his destitute condition.

"Hullo, friend, you make yourself at home!" Jasper said.

"Don't grudge me your doorstep," the man replied, in a voice far more refined than his looks. "It is not luxurious as a commodation."

"You're welcome, if you're tired."

"That I am."

He stretched out his worn feet as he spoke, and showed the state of his boots.

"And the child?"

"If I bring you food, will you go away quietly when you have eaten it? I dislike tramps and beggars about my doors."

"I am neither; and there was a time, Jasper Colliver, when you would not have turned me from your door. But I was better clad in those days, you see."

"Who are you that know my name?"

"Poverty brings oblivion, else you would know me, I think."

He lifted the battered cap that covered his head, and showed a scar on his forehead over which the hair refused to grow. Jasper looked at him for a moment, and exclaimed:

"Gracious powers! Ralph Rutherford!"

"The same."

"Come back after all these years. Where have you been?"

"Very nearly in the next world."

"And what has brought you to this pass?"

"The devil—in other words, a woman. Not give me something to eat, old friend. I haven't tasted food for six-and-thirty hours, and I'm well nigh spent."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FANCY BALL IN PROSPECT.

It is a fool who thinks by force of will to turn the current of a woman's will.

—Ralph Rutherford.

Ernest Dormer was going to give a fancy ball. She was a richer woman now than even her father's death had made her. A legacy from a distant relative whom she had never seen, but who had willed his

To no one else had she ever mentioned the name of Jasper Onslow, and she would have avoided it now if he had not breathed the subject.

"I'm sure I don't know anything about him," she said, fretfully. "I want to the place where he lodged, too, and the woman was quite insolent to me. Auntie said something about wanting to find that girl who was living with him."

"Doris!"

"Well, she was—you know that; and the woman fired up, and said she had so much people in her house—that she had only respectable married people, and all that. I suppose she had found out all about their goings on, and turned them out."

"Is that all you know?"

"All about him. I have seen her!"

"Seen her? Seen Miss Chisholm? Where did you see her?"

"At Limehouse."

"Limehouse?"

"Yes. She has sunk down into a sort of shopwoman to an old man there who sells all sorts of odds and ends. I was recommended to him to get me some lace for my dress for the ball, and I found a fancy to find out the place and go there. Muriel Chisholm was sitting in the shop, minding it."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure? I could not well mistake her. She has had her hair cut off, and was dressed like a nun, in a black dress. She looked thoroughly ashamed of herself, I can tell you."

"How came she there?"

"I did not ask. The old man said she was married to his assistant—the man who cleans the shop, and that sort of thing. I hope she may be, I'm sure; but I don't believe it."

"I should like to see her, poor girl."

"I don't want to see or hear any more of her, I'm sure," said Doris, contemptuously. "But it's a pity she should go on like that. I think I'll go and see her in the third and last act of the play."

"Man's an innocent brute."

"But why go to him at all. There's old lace to be got at other places, I suppose."

"Well, I went for a freak. I saw some of the lace by accident, and was told it was the property of this old Jew, or whatever he is. It is just the thing I want, so I am going to take all he has."

"I will go to-morrow," Ernest Dormer said. "I should like to find out what is really Miss Chisholm's position now. I was very much interested in her."

"Oh, go by all means. I can't say the subject interests me much. Come and look at the sketch of my dress, and tell me how you think it will look. I want this ball to be a grand success, Ernest."

"To what end, fair cousin?"

"To the end of pleasing myself, that is all—to the end of seeing my friends pleased," she added, with a sigh. "Do you grudge me so much of happiness?"

"I grudge you none. 'Tis yourself will not let yourself be happy, Doris."

"What would you have me do?" she asked, looking straight into his face with her keen, searching, dark eyes.

"The right, Doris."

"And that is—"

She glanced nervously around as she spoke, as if fearful that they might be overheard.

"The walls have not ears," he said, smiling. "We are quite alone. Would you like me to tell you what I think would make your life happier?"

"Yes, go on."

"I would have you be your better self. I would have you forget and forgive. Hold out your hand in amity to—"

"Stop, Ernest Dormer," she said, in a hard, set tone. "I know what you would say. I know your ultimatum. You shall hear mine. Rather than do what you call the right in this instance, I would die. Every farthing I possess into the broad sea. I would gather my costliest possessions into one vast pyre, and burn myself to death on the top of it, before I would see one penny of it pass into the hands of a branded felon and murderer."

"Hush! hush! I don't so much as that."

"Where, if worse can be, a traitor blacker than Judas, a false friend, a cowardly assassin, a fiend with the mark of Cain upon his brow."

"But there are others. He is not the only one."

"Don't speak of it," she said, savagely. "I get beside myself when I think of it. Don't begin the subject with me again, Ernest Dormer, or I might be tempted to kill you." Why did I put myself in your power by telling you my miserable secret?"

"It was hardly a secret. I suspected it before."

"How?"

"A sailor friend of mine, who lived at Tangier some months—you know I am a Jew, I think?"

"Yes."

"Was perfectly acquainted with a peasant girl—once Teresa."

"Stop! That will do. Where is this man?"

"My dear cousin, at the other side of the world, for aught I know. He merely mentioned the fact to me, that was all. He had seen me?"

"Only once—standing in a jeweller's shop, but he was sure he was not mistaken."

"He was. Tell him so. Make him understand that. See you do, Ernest; all will be well, then. I know how strong the resemblance was, but it was Teresa he saw, remember that."

"I will, if ever I see him. Your secret



to safe with me, Doris, though the keeping of it makes things uncomfortable for me sometimes."

"Ah, of course," she replied, with a smile. "Makes you a mark for husband-hunting women, and that sort of thing. But it is a little longer for me. I have more than that to bear."

She sighed as she spoke, and there was a weary look in her dark eyes that told of some hidden sorrow. She had a heavy burden to bear, this petted child of fortune, and she had to bear it with a smiling face and a calm exterior.

As she spoke, the door at the end of the room opened, showing the long vista of the drawing-room, with the strange-looking picture in a strong light at the end of it. Doris shuddered, and an icy chill seemed to creep over her heart.

"It is a ghastly picture," she said. "I might look like that if I were stricken down. Will the end be murder, I wonder? If he were alive and free, I should fear it. As it is, I am safe—safe, in spite of all such omens as that broad red stain."

"My dear, you are very pale," said Mrs. Bellows, who entered at that moment. "Are you too tired to come and see the patterns for the hangings of the hall-room?"

"Not a bit, auntie. Ernest and I were only talking something gravely, perhaps, about business."

"Nothing going wrong, dear, I hope?"

"Oh, no. Where are these patterns?"

"In your morning room. The young man is waiting down stairs for orders."

The hall was to be the most splendid thing that had ever been seen in Warwickshire, and the hall-room was to be turned into a copy of the reception-room at Whitehall in the days of Charles I.

Doris was going to appear as Henrietta Maria, though her beauty was of a far more regal order than that of the "small, dark, foreign-looking woman, as some historians, perhaps more truthful than poets, have described the hapless queen."

Ernest Dornier had promised to array himself in the costume which history and pictures have made so familiar with the dress of the martyr king.

The sketches of dresses which her various friends had sent her made Doris and her mother look on with the most brilliant affair of the season, and she was sparing no expense to fit up the Grange in accordance with the costly dresses of her guests.

The company were to come in masks if they chose—in proper person if they liked it better—and a very merry night was expected by all.

But Doris Carlyn had better have shut her doors and denied her guests, better have reduced the Grange and all in it to a smoking heap of ashes than have received the guest under its roof that fate and her evil genius were sending her.

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### AN UNDISCOVERED GUEST.

Then from these cavernous eyes

Two flashes seemed to start

As when the northern skies

Grow in December.

Longfellow.

Ernest Dornier was as good as his word. He had business which took him to London the next day, and he had resolved to go to Doris Carlyn's story was true. His interest in Doris Carlyn was great. He was not in love with her—never had been; but he looked upon her as a splendid woman, physically and intellectually, and he admired rather than rebuked the heronism of her.

Attended her, had in hand, and she loved. That she cared further in her wrong doing he would not believe, but that she was married, and so far beneath her as her cousin's words seemed to imply, was an enigma he could not solve.

He was master of his property now. The estate he had gone to the West Indies to see after had become his own through the death of his father, and he was an idle man as far as any actual business was concerned. He had sought for Jasper Ouslow, but no one could tell him of the artist's whereabouts. Mrs. Henderson was gone from Villiers street, and she had kept her own counsel while there, and none of the neighbors knew anything about the young couple who had owed so much to a chance suggestion from her. All that he was to learn of Doris he must learn from herself, if even indeed Doris was not mistaken altogether in her identity.

"You Quincio creature," Doris said, when she gave him Jasper Ouslow's address. "Take care you don't get murdered in that queer old hole, that is all. I would not have gone for worlds if I had known what sort of a place it was—a regular murderous-looking den."

Ernest Dornier laughed and went his way, and certainly found nothing very murderous-looking in the aspect of Limehouse when he stepped down from the boat, and inquired of the first acquaintance-looking person he met, the way to Marling Manor.

And a year had passed since Jasper Ouslow had accepted the old brokers' offer—just a year he had been the assistant to Jasper Ouslow in that quiet old place, and he was what he had been before in his life, content.

The autumn sun was shining down the quiet little street at the end of which the old man stood. The window was open, and the old things which hung about it, with their bright bits of coloring and scraps of metalwork, made a picturesque picture of the old wall, surrounded by its peaked roof.

No sign of any one was to be seen, and he passed in through the open door to find himself in the old apartment which served as shop and living room to the owner of the place.

It was an odd scene. Heterogeneous piles of articles, old and new, ancient and modern, were here, there, and everywhere, valuable bits of china and articles of vertu were disposed on shelves about the walls, and some specimens of rare and ancient jewelry and ivory work were securely locked in glass cases, and filled the shelves of a carved cabinet, which would have delighted a lover of antique furniture.

A handsome, dark-eyed child, in a makeshift sort of costume, was playing about on the floor, and a baby's wicker cradle, with a chubbily infant asleep in it, stood in a shaded corner, out of all draught, or likelihood of being touched by chance.

Muriel sat in a low chair, with a heap of lace in her lap, so diligently working that she had not heard him come in.

He looked at her for a moment in pleased surprise. There was something so pleasant in her look—the golden hair falling about her shoulders in curls, the softened expression of her face, her plain dress, all combined to make a very pretty picture. She was a very different person from the rather defiant-looking Muriel Ouslow he had met at Kingdon Grange, and he stood for a moment regarding her before he made his presence known. After a pause he spoke—

"Miss Chisholm," he said, gently.

And she started up with a crimson face at the sound of the old familiar name. For a brief moment she looked at him dubiously; a large beard, grown during his West Indian trip, had altered him considerably, and her thoughts had been far away.

Here recognition flashed into her face, and she held out her hands. "Mr. Dornier!" she exclaimed. "How glad I am to see you. How did you find us out?"

"I got your address from Miss Carlyn."

"From her?"

"Yes."

"She has been very friendly a few days since," she said. "I was in hopes I should have heard no more of her."

"She told me she had seen you."

"I thought it did not matter so she did not see my husband," Muriel said, sadly.

"But I see, she has sent you to him, to have him back to her side, but she shall not—she shall not."

"He is happy and contented now, and I will guard his happiness with my life if need be."

Ernest Dornier looked at her with a puzzled face.

"Is she a little mad, I wonder?" he said to himself. "What does she mean? I don't think Miss Carlyn knows anything about your husband," he said, gently.

"She imagines he is a shopman here, or something of that sort. What I might say for, madam," he said, hesitating what to call her, "was to assure myself that you were well and happy—and to ask you if you could tell me of the whereabouts of Jasper Ouslow. I have been to Villiers street, but I could get no information there."

Muriel laughed now, a happy, musical little laugh.

"Before I tell you," she said, "will you promise me one thing?"

"Anything possible to grant," he replied.

"What is it?"

"That you will never tell her, your cousin, where to find him—that you will never betray to her in any way that you know where he is."

"I promise most willingly," he said, gravely. "No good can ever come of their meeting. Rely upon it, if I can prevent her crossing his path I will."

"Then I'll trust you," she said. "You have seen the shopman's wife; now I'll introduce you to the shopman."

She slipped back the little secret door behind the curtain as she spoke, and called "Jasper," and to Ernest Dornier's inexpressible amazement the artist stepped out into the light.

He had a small enamel picture and a piece of soft leather in his hand, but he had grown stouter and fresher looking, and had lost the worn, haggard appearance which had been so evident during the last days of his stay at Kingdon.

"Here is an old friend, dear," Muriel said, as Ernest stretched out his hand, and the two men greeted each other heartily.

"I needn't ask how you are, Ouslow; you are ten times the man you were long ago."

"Thanks to Heaven and my wife," he replied, earnestly. "I am, but how did you find me out?"

"I heard accidentally that Miss Chisholm—I beg her pardon, Mrs. Ouslow—was here, and I came to ask tidings of you from her."

"You won't betray my whereabouts, will you, old friend?"

"No, I have just promised Mrs. Ouslow to do so."

"Not a soul, I swear it."

He knew full well that Jasper meant Doris Carlyn, though neither mentioned her name, and the promise was given with a solemnity which was both felt and understood by all there.

"You must come and see our home," Jasper said. "It is a queer little nook, but we are very happy, eh, Muriel?"

Muriel replied only by a look, but it was enough. Her humble home, her baby, and Jasper's love, made earth a heaven to her, and she wanted no more.

Ernest was duly introduced to the young tyrant in the cradle, who was called "Jasper Ernest," and to Jasper Collier, who took his fancy mightily, as a quiet, old-fashioned gentleman, and then he was taken to see the lodging by the river that Jasper and Muriel occupied.

Jasper explained to him, in answer to his offer of assistance, that they should prefer remaining where they were to trying to get anything else to do. They owned all their present comfort and prosperity to Jasper Collier, and he liked the employment, which was nothing of the kind which Doris Carlyn had so spitefully hinted at.

"It is a real pleasure to touch up some of the splendid things that came across me in the East," he said. "No one knows me here, and the old man is a thorough gentleman. I have not lost all hope of painting a picture worthy of the exhibition yet. My power is coming back to me, but until I can I will keep out of sight. Come and see as when you can be spared from the world, but keep our secret if any one should ask for our whereabouts."

"My cousin Doris is possessed with a devil," he said. "A shopman, indeed! Well, it isn't to be thought she will find him out, if ever she does."

To Doris herself he spoke very carefully about Muriel Chisholm's husband.

"Yes, I found the place," he said, "and saw the old fellow and all that. It is not a very nice locality for a lady to penetrate. I wouldn't go there again if I were you."

"I shan't. I had quite enough of it when I was there before. Did you see her?"

"Yes."

"And is she married?"

"No, she says."

"And to the shopman?"

"I suppose that is what you would call him."

"Did you see him? What is he like?"

"Well, he looked rather dusty, and appeared to be cleaning something. He seemed very proud and fond of his wife and child. They have a fine little baby. I'd let Muriel alone if I were you, Doris. She seems perfectly contented."

"I don't want to interfere with her. Did you find out anything about—"

"Jasper Ouslow? Not much. No one seems to know anything but the bare fact that he has left Villiers street."

"I'm sorry. I would have helped him if he would have taken help from me," Doris replied, but she was so full of her preparations for the ball that she was not very much interested in Muriel and her belongings.

The lace came home, beautifully mended and cleaned, and the effect of it on the rich ruby velvet she had chosen to wear was superb.

The night of the ball came, and the avenue and grounds at Kingdon were brilliantly illuminated. The paths were at liberty to enter the brilliantly-lighted avenue through which the carriages passed to the grand entrance. A force of the Warwick police

kept the gate which barred intruders from the lawn and terraces in front of the house, and prevented the people from pressing forward too far. But it was a good-humored crowd, for Doris Carlyn was popular to a degree among her tenants, and behaved with almost regal hospitality when she opened her doors at all. So on this night there were huge barrels of beer at each lodge gate, presided over by her gamekeepers and their assistants, and piles of bread and cheese, that none who came to see might go hungry away.

She received her guests in the large hall-room, with Ernest Dornier and Mrs. Bellows by her side, and people whispered to one another that it was sure to be a match between the cousin and the girl.

The scene was at its height, and the hall-room a long vista of kings and queens, peasants and pages, whirling in a pretty waltz, when a servant came up to his mistress.

"You are wanted, madam," he said.

"Who wants me?"

"A gentleman. One who has come to the hall."

"His name?"

"The man handed her a card," he said.

"I think it is a joke, madam," he said.

"The gentleman hesitated when I asked him, and then wrote that. He has sent you the name of the character he has come in."

Doris took the card and read, written in a hand she did not know—

"Over Cromwell."

"An ominous name to send to Henrietta Maria," she said. "Of course, it is a jest, Peter. Go and tell the Lord Protector that the Queen will attend him in a few minutes. By the way, where is he?"

In your morning room, madam. He said he would not detain you from your guests a moment, but he wanted a private word with you before he entered the ball-room."

"Tell him I will come directly."

She did not pause an instant to think whether the anonymous were other than a jest. She knew no one could present themselves at the ball, and she was a confirmed spinster, and she had signed none except for people she knew thoroughly.

Ernest Dornier had the privilege of inviting a few of his particular friends, but she knew she could trust him, and she went to her anonymous guest without a fear.

The morning room was lit, and adorned in the same style as the rest of the house, and looked exceedingly pretty.

In the centre of the room, with the light of a crimson lamp falling full upon him, stood a tall man, of commanding presence, in the garb made familiar to us by the portraits of Oliver Cromwell.

He wore a breastplate and gorget of fine Milanese workmanship, and a helmet and gambeson of the same completed his costume. He was masked, as it was allowable for the guests to be, but as his hostess entered, he removed helmet and mask, and turned his face full upon her.

Doris Carlyn looked at him for a moment, and then, stretching out her arms with a faint cry, she sank insensible at his feet.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 37.)

## George Lovelace's Temptation.

### CHAPTER I.

In a dingy street in the precincts of Covent Garden there stood, about five years ago, a small house only accessible by a dark passage, into which the night of a dark stormy evening penetrated, and which at night received a small portion only of the meagre rays thrown by a struggling gas-lamp placed at its entrance. This house, at number 12, was occupied by an old lady who let lodgings at low rates to needy lodgers. One of her rooms had lately been tenanted by a man of about thirty and twenty, the regularity of whose features showed, in spite of the havoc played by poverty and distress, that he was of a class higher than his present circumstances seemed to warrant.

Ernest was duly introduced to the young tyrant in the cradle, who was called "Jasper Ernest," and to Jasper Collier, who took his fancy mightily, as a quiet, old-fashioned gentleman, and then he was taken to see the lodging by the river that Jasper and Muriel occupied.

Jasper explained to him, in answer to his offer of assistance, that they should prefer remaining where they were to trying to get anything else to do. They owned all their present comfort and prosperity to Jasper Collier, and he liked the employment, which was nothing of the kind which Doris Carlyn had so spitefully hinted at.

"It is a real pleasure to touch up some of the splendid things that came across me in the East," he said. "No one knows me here, and the old man is a thorough gentleman. I have not lost all hope of painting a picture worthy of the exhibition yet. My power is coming back to me, but until I can I will keep out of sight. Come and see as when you can be spared from the world, but keep our secret if any one should ask for our whereabouts."

"My cousin Doris is possessed with a devil," he said. "A shopman, indeed! Well, it isn't to be thought she will find him out, if ever she does."

To Doris herself he spoke very carefully about Muriel Chisholm's husband.

"Yes, I found the place," he said, "and saw the old fellow and all that. It is not a very nice locality for a lady to penetrate. I wouldn't go there again if I were you."

"I shan't. I had quite enough of it when I was there before. Did you see her?"

"Yes."

"And is she married?"

"No, she says."

"And to the shopman?"

"I suppose that is what you would call him."

"Did you see him? What is he like?"

"Well, he looked rather dusty, and appeared to be cleaning something. He seemed very proud and fond of his wife and child. They have a fine little baby. I'd let Muriel alone if I were you, Doris. She seems perfectly contented."

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(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 37.)

knowledge as to what were the doctrines which that orthodox divine so anxiously combated. At the same time George was honest. He had often been flogged, but never for anything dishonorable or immoral; and when he left school, and spent the allowance which his father gave him in the society of his equals in London, his life was not marred by any of the yieldings to the temptations of vice which so often triumph over youths of the age at which he was then.

He was not much in the society of his father, and when he was there were little signs of affection shown by either. Sir George, in addition to the perverseness which I have already said was a cold reserve, was a certain way determined doggedness with occasional outbursts of furious passion, which made him an awkward man to be dependent upon. He was a man also of hobbies, and was to the unhappy sight who crossed him when he bestowed one. One of his hobbies was the English aristocracy, and he was anxious that his son should marry a daughter of a neighboring earl, for whose family he had the greatest respect, and whose political opinions were as conservative as his own. This young lady was twelve years younger than George Lovelace; but old Sir George was in no hurry that his son should marry—there was plenty of time, he thought.

Meanwhile, George can be brought by my teaching to fall in with my views; and as he is a good looking fellow, and his father is not averse, the girl will probably be compliant."

Louise proposed. Affairs might have gone on as Sir George wished, and this story be written, had not the countess Lovelace, in a fishing ramble in Breckshire, met with the pretty daughter of a Welsh doctor. George was like his father, subject to sudden impulses, and also, like him, apt to be resolute in his determinations. One of his impulses was to marry this girl; not at first, or in a hurry, because he was not sure of her affection; but after the acquaintance of nearly three years, and when the sudden death of her father had left her dependent on the charity of an aunt whom she disliked, and the offer of a man whom she had grown to love seemed an easy way out of all her troubles.

Ethel Lovelace was very fair, and George had fallen for her extreme beauty to win from his father his approval of a marriage which he had said nothing till it was over.

George had expected some opposition, and he knew he should have difficulties with his parent; but he did not anticipate the torrent of indignation and abuse which was showered on his head. Sir George flew into a passion, that the servants had to come to his son's assistance, and with difficulty prevented him from laying hands on George, and inflicting personal violence.

"Out of my sight!" he said, and he called him a hard name. "I never thought you were my son, and now I'll own you no more. Take the jade, who has made a fool of you, away, and let her know that no penny shall you or she touch while I live, or when I am dead. No, not if you lie rotting in a poor-house."

And from that day Sir George had refused to see or hear from his son. Then had begun a "sair" time for the two poor folk who were ill able to battle with the world. And since then often and often had George thought of the illness which had prevented him from making the most of the teaching which he had had, and left him utterly unable to turn his hand to anything that could get him bread. He had applied to his friends, but they had not done anything for him. You see, Sir George had been beforehand with him, and, as he knew that he had cast off his son in consequence of disgraced conduct and atrocious behavior generally, he was the more ready to take up the cry.

"Ye vixen," and not stopping to inquire who it was that George had married, had turned, only too willingly, the cold shoulder on one who had not once refused her help. Ethel had asked from her aunt, who used the old argument so often used to palliate neglect, "You have made your bed, and you must lie on it."

Then in many ways George sought for employment—as a tutor, as a clerk, as a writer in the lower class of daily publications, as a shopman even, and as a messenger. Everything he failed to secure him permanent work. He was too old for one place, he was refused another as having too testimonials, his father's malice got him turned out of a third, the ruin of his employer had lost him a fourth. And week by week, month by month, as each day found him ignorant how he should find food for the next, he plodded on, getting sadder and more despairing, seeing Ethel's face getting wan and more wan, and knowing that she was becoming less and less able to bear the trial which was coming upon her. Yet she had borne it, and her babe was an additional link which bound her heart to her husband's, and gave them courage to face the troubles which came so thickly across their path. And they were struggling with those who could work to do much better than nurse her infant, and he hardly able to make the wretched pittance which he earned by food enough to keep him from hunger after he had given to his wife and child. Yet they loved each other, and though to each not unfrequently came the thought that the other's happiness would be better served by their marriage, the perfect trust which each had in the other's affection made them together more willing to share unflinchingly the difficulties which lay before them.

At the time of which I tell you George had come in tired and dispirited; for he had earned little that day, and even the small of welcome which he had seen his entrance had failed to remove, as hitherto, the look of anxiety and despair which he now so firmly planted on his features. Still, as his wife got from her cupboard the lump of bread and piece of cold meat, which was to make their miserable meal, and warmed up what was left of a quart of ale, and setting it on the table urged him to eat, with a loving look in her pale face and blue eyes, George felt that he was not altogether miserable, and was, in one respect at least, better off than his neighbors.

They talked of the chances of his father



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"WHAT makes your hair so white, grandpa?" inquired a little maiden. "I am very old, my dear. I was in the ark," says grandpa, with a laugh. "Oh! the child rejoined. 'Are you Noah?' 'No; I am not Noah.' 'Are you Shem, then?' 'No; I am not Shem.' 'Are you Ham?' 'No; not even Ham.' 'Then you must be Japheth,' impatiently said the child. 'No; I'm not Japheth.' 'Then, grandpa, you must be a beast.'"







[illegible]







## UNDER FALSE COLORS.

It was a very warm August. The hot afternoon sun poured in through the open windows of the Thelma Club. It rested languidly upon the gay fittings of crimson and gold, the richly decorated walls, and marble statues, while the large picture glass reflected thousands of miniature rays, as the bright sunlight shone into the room.

In a luxurious arm-chair, drawn up to one of the open windows with a view to inhaling what few draughts of air might find their way in, lounged a young man in the uniform of a crack cavalry regiment, fast asleep. It was a handsome, proud, patrician face—just such a face as a sculptor would choose for a model of the world-famous son of Chryseas. The warm, gently stirred the rich chestnut curls which shadowed a square white brow. The perfect mouth was only half concealed by the soft, brown mustache, while long, black lashes fringed the closed eyes and rested against the cheeks, which had been browned by exposure to the hot summer sun.

Two peculiarities about Ernie Damar always struck strangers most forcibly. His great strength of frame and beauty of face, and looking at him as he lay sleeping that hot August afternoon, no one would wonder that the strong, handsome, young officer was a general favorite.

After some time the door opened, and the quiet of the room was broken by a merry, ringing laugh.

"Why, Damar, old fellow, what a lazy young giant you are! I thought fellows were quite right to give you the pen-name of 'Sleeping Beauty.' What do you say?"

The beauty sat up and rubbed his eyes. "Jack," said he, "what was I to do? Everything is so dreadfully slow a fellow has nothing to do but smoke and sleep."

"Why not have spent the afternoon in the flow by the side of the Walworths girl?" asked Jack Delaval.

"I am tired of the Walworths set," replied Damar. "The father is political, and I hate politics; and Marie and the old lady only care for fortune; and as I have just lost mine, I am no longer eligible, and valued for sale. It is almost worth while to lose one's money to see the estimate one's friends mark one's worth at."

"Has all your money gone, Damar?" asked Jack, smiling himself upon a table opposite his friend.

"No, not all," he replied. "I have enough to pay my subscription to the Thelma Club, keep my hunter, and pay for my clothes at Fother's. The only thing I need to satisfy my requirements, but not to marry on, and now, thanks to the smash of the Great (London) Bank, perhaps the women will be kind enough to leave me alone."

"Very gracious, I must say," laughed Lieutenant Delaval. "Who would have thought I should live to hear the pat of the regiment, and the id of all the beauties of the season, utter such a sentiment? They have spoiled you, Beauty. I had better take you away with me, I think."

"Are you going away, Jack?" he asked.

"Glad to say 'Yes' to that, my boy," replied Delaval. "I get my leave just now from the authorities, and to-morrow I am off for a month of quiet country enjoyment in the bosom of my family."

"And you are mean enough to cut and run just when your dearest friend has had a reverse of fortune, as the novels say?" Jack did not think of it.

"Well, but, Ernie, look here, old fellow. I want you to go and ask leave too, and come down with me. We can try our hands on the grouse on the twelfth. It will be awfully jolly if you will come."

"Do you mean it, Jack?"

"Indeed I do," he replied. "I never was more in earnest in my life. And I will give you another good tip, Damar. As you were grumbling last night about your poverty, and concluded that you would go in for an heiress, I can introduce you to a stunner."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed Damar.

"Who might she be, Jack?"

"She might be the Queen of the Caribbees, but she is not. She is the neatest and prettiest maiden under the sun, and has just come into some fine property, valued at about sixty thousand pounds."

"That's the style, Delaval—quite in my line. But let me ask you one thing, my friend—have you not secured this valuable freehold property and most desirable young female for yourself?" asked the Beauty, yawning.

"Because I am far too good a son to go against the wishes of my family," he replied.

"The young lady is a thousand and one, and my mother is an old-fashioned dowager who retains desperately stout old-fashioned ideas, and the very thought of my marrying my cousin would be quite a sufficient reason with her for placing me in that exclusive but not very desirable home for the invalid, Colney Hatch."

"But what have the old man and Miss Delaval to do with Canon Ashby and grouse?"

"Everything, non capitaine. The heiress is staying now with my mother, and, if you will say you will join me, I will write and let them know at once. What say you? Will you come, Damar?"

"Write to me, my lord—write it down a bit, to make a note of it for the immortal Weller. I think I must accompany you, and look up the heiress, Jack. It will be a good lesson for that flitting young lady, Miss Walworth, to find out that I am not so deeply hit that I cannot tear myself away from her."

"Capital," said Delaval. "There is spirit enough in Damar of yours to throw off a woman's yoke. Well, I will go and write to Canon Ashby now, and see you again later on to fit all about the trains."

The following evening the two men stood on the platform of Barrington Station, watching the porters getting out their luggage.

"I do not see anything of old Hughes and the 'trap,'" remarked Lieutenant Delaval to his friend.

"Beg pardon, sir, but was you looking out for a trap?" asked a porter.

"Yes, we were. Has it come, do you happen to know?" returned Delaval.

"Yes, sir, there's a trap and pair waiting through the gate. They are the Canon Ashby horses, I know, maybe they are what you expect?"

"All right, my man—thank you. Send us our luggage on as soon as possible, please," said Lieutenant Delaval, turning away.

"Why, Jack, what a time you are in coming! I could not wait any longer, and so came to hunt you up."

hand, and Captain Damar thought that, if Miss Walworth had looked so sweet and misgiving, he might have found leaving London a much harder matter than he did.

"Miss Delaval declined to come with me, Jack. She says it is too hot, and that the ponies kick up too much dust, so I drove her and Cox myself—and I am not so dusty after all, am I, Jack?"

"Not a bit of it, Cora," said Miss Delaval, as you call her, has missed the first sight of the pride and pet of the regiment."

Damar of ours, as we call him, or the Sleeping Beauty of the 4th Hussars."

"You must not mind Jack, Miss Delaval," said Captain Damar. "He is very fond of any kind of chaff."

The three young people were soon settled cozily behind her and Cox, and rattling over the hard smooth stones with the little town of Barrington was passed. Captain Damar sat next to Miss Delaval, and undertook the management of the little high spirited ponies, while that young lady pointed out the different objects of interest as they passed them on the road, and altogether made the drive a very agreeable one to the captain.

"Ernie, do you see that large house amongst the trees over there?" Lieutenant Delaval asked his friend, as they left the town behind them.

"What about it?" said Damar.

"Why, a proper of your idea last evening of going in for an heiress, there is up ward of ten thousand a year being spent there by old Michael Raynes," replied Delaval. "That is another tip, old fellow—he is the Rothschild of the county, and only one daughter to inherit all."

"I will make a man, about it, Jack, and perhaps we will give the fair lady a call," replied his friend.

While this conversation went on, an expression of astonishment and perplexity sat upon the mobile features of Miss Delaval.

"Jack," she said, at last, "you do not mean to tell me that your friend is one of those miserable men who think of money in connection with a wife?"

"It is useless to think of a wife apart from money, I assure you, Miss Delaval," Captain Damar hastened to observe. "They are very expensive additions to housekeeping, and Jack and I were having a little quiet chat last night about ways and means connected with the future lot of an unfortunate officer in her majesty's army who has just lost nearly all his little fortune and has nothing but poverty to contemplate. That is how the conversation arose, Miss Delaval, and I must say I do not consider it quite fair of Jack to repeat it."

"Well, Ernie, I thought it kind to tell Cora, because she might give Miss Raynes a hint to keep out of your way, you know," remarked Jack, with perfect nonchalance.

"I say, old fellow, you had better stop, or I shall be under the painful necessity of quietly pitching you out," said Captain Damar, while an angry light shone for a moment in his deep blue eyes.

We are at home at last, Damar, don't be so angry, said Jack, as they turned into a long drive with handsome elms all most meeting above their heads.

They stopped before a large old-fashioned house, almost hidden behind an abundance of ivy and roses which seemed to have contended for the possession of the whole of the front of the building, so closely did they cluster and to some round in its intricate growth. At the top of a flight of low broad steps stood a lady in morning, her face sufficiently resembling Lieutenant Delaval's to mark the relationship at a glance.

"I am very glad to see you, Captain Damar," she said, clasping the young man's hand, "and very pleased to welcome you to Canon Ashby."

It was warmly and kindly said, and it was not long before Ernie Damar recognized in Mrs. Delaval one of those rather rare specimens of middle-aged ladies in whom there exists a strong feeling of sympathy with the thoughts and actions of young people. Some there are in the world who, like each other in their youth, and grow old and old all their lives, so disagreeably matter of fact are they in all things, and so totally devoid of all the brightness and freshness which glorifies the morning of life.

Captain Damar was not introduced to Miss Delaval until dinner was announced, so that he had not very much time to make his observations before proceeding to the dining room. He had time to study her during the repast, and came to the conclusion that she was very dignified and handsome, and that her large dark eyes and raven hair gave her a sort of "heaven-like" cut which you can detect at once, Jack, as the gallant captain expressed himself to his friend an hour afterward over their cigars.

"Yes, Cora always looks rather dignified to me," replied his friend.

"Is she called 'Cora' as well as your sister?"

"Yes, it is an old family name, you see. My mother is 'Cora too; there are three of them, and all Delaval. It was to get rather confused between them, only we could always distinguish them by the old one, the black one, and the light one."

"Really, Jack, well, I don't know which is the most complimentary and flattering, said the 'light one' behind them; she had crossed the lawn and stood behind them in time to hear Jack's concluding words. "Now we want your company in doors," she continued. "There are some grand plans for to-morrow to be discussed—some alone, and, putting her arm through Jack Delaval's, she led him toward the house."

"You must excuse my sending for you," said Mrs. Delaval, "the girls are anxious to fix an excursion they have thought of for some time for to-morrow. I must tell you, Captain Damar, that there is a lovely little country seat for sale in the neighborhood, and my niece has taken such a fancy to it that she thinks of buying it just as it stands. Its late owner was a merchant prince from Liverpool or Manchester—one of those dreadful places we would rather hear about than go to—and he became a bankrupt all at once, and left in a hurry. I see the place is for sale, and we thought of driving over to look at it—what do you say?"

"And I will tell you what, mamma—we might come home round by the Oak Farm, and get our tea in Mrs. Marsh's beautiful arbor, and then drive home by moonlight," said Cora, and Captain Damar thought that the speaker's blue eyes looked remarkably lovely as she raised them to Mrs. Delaval's face.

"Are you thinking of setting, Miss Delaval?" he asked, turning toward her.

"Not exactly, Captain Damar," she replied. "I am only anxious to have Strathmore for my own because it is the loveliest place I ever saw, and I should like to have it. You know I am not bound to live there at present—I can let it. Or we might all go and live there: what do you think?"

"Mrs. Delaval smiled, while Jack, who was standing by, said, 'as he called her, stroked her golden hair, and, turning into a loud laugh, said, 'Cool, by Jove!'

"Cool, by Jove!"

"Cool, by Jove!"

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BITTER.

Discontented Cabby (to ladies, who, wishing to get rid of their small change, have tendered him one fifty-cent note, one twenty-five, two ten-cent ones, and five cents in coin—the sum total amounting to his proper fare.—"Well, 'ow long might yer both a been a savin' up for this little treat?"

"Do not be foolish, Jack," she said. "It would be very nice to live at Strathmore, and it is very kind of Cora to ask us."

"All right, blue eyes," said Jack. "I was only thinking it was rather cool of Cora to ask us to shut up this place, for getting that she might marry, and then we should be roofless. Now come, and you shall sing for me," and putting his arm round her, Jack walked with the "small Cora" to the piano, while Captain Damar looked on with eyes which evidently envied his friend's brother's privilege.

The night was far advanced when the last song was sung; for Cora Delaval had a magnificent voice, and one song after another delighted and charmed her small audience, while Ernie Damar listened and turned over the pages of music with a sense of the profoundest admiration for the bright and beautiful singer, in his heart.

But it won't do," he said to himself as he got into bed that night. "It is no use to let that pretty little golden-haired girl run off with my heart. I must do as the rest of the fellows in our regiment do—either keep my heart to myself or give it to some one who can combine the useful with the sentimental."

Jack Delaval undertook to drive the party to Strathmore. The day was warm and close, and the afternoon sun was very hot as they bowed along in the waggoneette between the thick dusty hedges and underneath the tall shady trees.

Ernie Damar sat next to Miss Delaval, and, in accordance with his resolution of the night before, he closed to her and endeavored to make himself as agreeable as his dignified reserve and his own natural indolence would permit. It was a pleasant drive, and Ernie enjoyed it; for, in spite of the heat and the dust, he had a bright and beautiful picture before him; and Cora Delaval's face in its setting of gold, with the pure earnest depths of her eyes, blue eyes, more than once brought to his memory the expression of one of Murillo's Madonnas.

"This is Strathmore," she said, as Jack stopped before a pretty little gothic lodge overgrown with ivy and vines, and a Virginia creeper—"this is Strathmore! Jack, suppose we get out and walk up the avenue, and then we—and especially Cora—can see to great advantage the external beauties of the place."

It was without doubt a lovely spot. The grounds were small but very beautifully laid out; miniature woods were watered by picturesque streams, green and mossy dells were shadowed and sheltered by luxuriant trees of every kind and description, while the park and parkettes of many tinted and brilliant flowers surrounded the house with their brightness and beauty.

Miss Delaval was much pleased with the costly elegance of the interior of Strathmore. The drawing room, with their delicate hangings of pale green, splendid glasses, and graceful portieres, resembled some miniature palace or fairy scene, and Miss Delaval forgot her dignity as she wandered from one room to the other approving and admiring.

"Oh, Jack, I like these the best," said his cousin, as they came to some rare built cabinets filled with articles of vertu and valuable bric-a-brac.

"So I imagine. You always did prefer the ornamental to the useful. Perhaps, if you are very civil, Cora will present you with one of those old cracked tea-cups," he said, as he pulled the corners of his mustache and laughed at her.

Captain Damar, standing by, saw a look of suppressed fun shine out of Miss Delaval's eyes as she looked at Jack, and she thought of the sweetest and most expressive young face he had seen since the green grass had covered the fair living sister who had been the idol of his heart and the pride of his life in the days that were gone.

They were a long time in going over Strathmore—there was much to talk about and plenty to see—and it was late when they finally settled down to tea in the shrub and sumptuous meal which the farmer's wife at the Oak Farm speedily prepared, and the round, full moon was high in the sky when they at last thought of turning homeward.

"I have had such a happy day," said Cora Delaval, as Ernie Damar helped her out of the waggoneette.

"You look as bright and contented as if all the days were alike happy to you," said Ernie. "You seem to me especially formed for a life of sunshine and flowers."

"Who knows?" she answered, with a little silvery laugh. "I may find myself envying my cousin yet. A life of hard work and battling with the world may be before me instead of the flowers and sunshine."

"I fervently trust not, Miss Delaval," replied Ernie. "After all, he said, smiling, 'wealth is not happiness; and I think the latter is the more preferable of the two.' Do you not agree with me?"

They were in the hall by this time, standing with the full light of the lamp upon the sweet face of Cora, out of whose

blue eyes there shot a glance of mischief as she answered him.

"Oh, Captain Damar, of course I think so; but you? You surely will never desert your own doctrine of wealth first—will you?"

"I'll never forgive Jack Delaval," he replied, flushing at her words, as she ran lightly up-stairs. "I should not care a fig for anybody else's banter, but not from you—not from you," he muttered, as he threw himself into a chair.

Already Ernie Damar found that his thoughts dwell constantly upon the fair face, in its setting of waving gold, which had met his view first at Barrington Station.

The days passed on; bright, happy days they were, flooded with golden sunshine and the happiness of "Love's young dream." It was strange to notice how completely Captain Damar succumbed to his admiration of Cora Delaval, and how constantly the gigantic form of the handsome soldier was to be seen by the side of the small girlish figure which seemed to have entirely taken possession of the Beauty of the 4th Hussars.

"It is no use my staying here any longer, Jack," he observed one night to his friend, while they were smoking in the morning; "I have better cut and run before I find myself telling her so."

"Then you will not secure our heiress, though I have given you a splendid chance?" said Delaval. "Won't Strathmore tempt you, old fellow?"

"No, Jack," answered Ernie, giving himself a shake; "nothing would tempt me. I am a very loyal subject, and very devoted to the Queen; but all the wealth of Windsor Castle would have no effect upon the Captain of the 4th, who too thoroughly loves Cora Delaval to weigh her against rank and station."

"Bravo, Beauty!" exclaimed Jack. "You are vastly improved in sentiment since you came to Canon Ashby. We will discuss your flight in the morning. You must not imagine we will let you go off so easily as you think. Now good-night, my boy; I mean to turn in," said Jack, striding toward the house.

Ernie Damar did not feel inclined to follow his friend's example, though it was late, and the house had long been still and quiet; so he lighted a fresh cigar, and walked back and forth in the shrub and garden, with no sound near him except the occasional snapping of a dry twig beneath his foot, or the sudden flight of some disturbed bird.

Suddenly the stillness of the night was broken by harsh and loud shouts and calls, and Ernie left the cover of the trees, and stood on one high ground to try to ascertain the cause of the evident disturbance. It was very apparent; a red lurid light seemed to cover one part of the sky with its reflection. Ernie knew that somewhere there was fire, and he rushed into the house.

"Jack!" he called, knocking at his friend's bedroom door, "get up. There's a fire at a farm in the Barrington Road."

Without waiting for his friend, Ernie Damar tore out of the house and made for the scene of distress and danger, easily guided by the light, which seemed to have shot up brighter and higher.

He lost no time in reaching the farm, where sad confusion and uproar reigned. The bright light proceeded from the haystacks, which were too far gone to be extinguished, and which were left to blaze as they might, while all the hands which had mustered to help were busily occupied in saving the lives of the inhabitants of the farmhouse itself, which was burning furiously.

Captain Damar pushed into a group of men. "Is every one out of the house?" he asked, as he took off his coat and folded it round a woman who was only half clad.

"All excepting one, sir, and he's a cripple boy as is sleeping in that corner room which the fire has just caught, and no one can get at him," hastily replied a man.

"Give me a hand with this ladder—no! Steady, my men—put it underneath that window. Next give me a rope; I want to put it round me—that will do. Now hold that ladder firmly."

The young soldier swiftly passed up the rungs to the window, which was fast becoming overgrown with smoke and tongues of fire. It did not take many minutes for him to force the window and step inside upon the suffocating, dense vapor which filled the room.

"Now, my boy, where are you?" he asked, but there was no reply. He was not long however in finding the bed upon which the poor little cripple lay, perfectly insensible, and half suffocated with the poisonous air. Taking the child in his arms, he placed him over his shoulder, and secured him firmly with the rope.

Meanwhile the flames burst out all round him, fearfully scorching his face and hands.

It was with great difficulty that Ernie forced the window, again and reached the ladder, for the thick smoke had almost deprived him of his senses. As he stepped out upon the ladder with his light burden, a loud cheer from below rent the air; and as the voices ceased he heard from the room he had just left the sound of the falling floor echo amidst the noise and din, and he knew that he had not been a minute too soon in leaving the burning house.

"Give him to me—I will carry him to his mother."

"Oh, Captain Damar, how noble of you!" said a voice, as he stepped on to the ground.

"Cora—Miss Delaval: What are you doing here?" he asked.

"My cousin and I came with Jack," she replied. "We heard you call him, and we could not rest, knowing that there was so shocking a thing as fire about."

Farmer Dale and his wife were soon found, and the poor mother's frantic grief for little Johnny was speedily changed into thankful help to carry away what things they had managed to save, and Ernie Damar was everywhere. It was owing to his energy and example that the whole of the outbuildings were saved; and Cora and her cousin were busy with the rest, passing forward the buckets of water as the men pumped. It was while Cora was busy doing that a piece of wood fell against her outstretched arm and knocked her down. In a moment Ernie was at her side, and helped her up.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, hurriedly.

"Not much," she replied; "only my arm a little. Do not stay with me; they may want you."

"There is nothing more for me to do," he said. "I have done all that I could, and the fire is steadily dying down. I will take you home, Miss Delaval. Is your arm very painful?"

Ernie lightly took hold of it as it hung down at her side, and Cora moaned slightly.

"Do not touch it, please," she said; "I think it must be broken."

"Broken, my darling—my little patient Cora! he said, putting an arm round her, and leading her away. "I will take you home, and then go to Barrington for a doctor for you."

"No, Captain Damar, you must not," she replied; "you require rest yourself. You are dreadfully singed and scorched; I saw it by the firelight."

"Do you think that I could rest, knowing that you were in pain, Cora? Do you know that I have not experienced rest since I came to Canon Ashby, and first saw and then loved you? I am only a poor man, little one," he said, stopping for a moment to look into her face as she turned it from him; "but, if you will promise to wait for me and love me, I will sell out and get some of my friends to find me something to do under Government. Will you wait, Cora?"

"Yes," she whispered—"as long as you wish."

Mrs. Delaval met them at the door, and Captain Damar delivered his charge into her hands, while he set off for the doctor.

During his walk to Barrington, Ernie's thoughts were bright and happy ones, and in spite of his burns and bruises he walked proudly and joyfully in the soft light of the early morning.

Upon examination it was found that Cora's arm was not broken, only badly sprained, and promising very shortly to be all right again. When he retired to his room for an hour or two of rest, Ernie's thoughts were arrested by the sight that he met in the looking-glass.

"Well, of all the black, dingy-looking fellows conceivable to make an offer to a sweet girl, I thank myself! I wonder I did not frighten her. It is settled now, and I am glad of it, and I know I shall never regret it."

When Captain Damar entered the breakfast room the next morning, he found Miss Delaval, her daughter, Jack, and his cousin all duly assembled. Jack received his friend with a broad grin, while Cora looked pretty confused as she held out her hand to Ernie, and answered his inquiries about her rest. After some little time Captain Damar noticed Lieutenant Delaval's vain attempts at gravity.

"Is anything up this morning, Jack?" he asked.

Jack grinned broader than ever.

"You are a nice fellow to bring down into the country!" observed Jack. "I actually take the trouble to bring you here on purpose for you to make a good match and marry my cousin, when you go, like a gigantic idiot, and fall in love with a penniless girl, who has nothing but a nice face to give you in return! Mother, are you going to give Cora to Damar? Say you won't, for he is miserably poor, and will have to sell his commission to furnish his house with; and we cannot afford to spare the Beauty of the regiment to a dowdier girl like Cora; and I, for one, set my face against the arrangement."

"Captain Damar," said Mrs. Delaval, turning to Ernie, "I hope that you will be generous enough to forgive our deception. It was commenced at first at Jack's instigation, and kept up, I believe, to please my niece. I hope that you will not be very dreadfully disappointed at having to marry an heiress after all, and, in all probability settle at Strathmore."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Delaval?" asked Ernie, looking from one to another, strangely perplexed.

"I mean this, Captain Damar," she replied—"we have unwittingly confused you in respect of the two Coras; and it is my niece, and not my daughter whom you love."

"It was all my fault," said her niece, laying her hand on Ernie's. "I have always had such a horrible dread of any one wishing to marry me for the sake of my fortune, that when Jack wrote and said he was going to bring you here, and that you were looking out for an heiress, and what a splendid joke would be for Cora—who looks more dignified and heiress-like than I do—to pretend to me and for me to take her place, I jumped at the idea at once, and we have kept it up grandly ever since."

"Then you are not Jack's sister?" asked Ernie.

"No, I am his cousin," she replied.

"The very jolliest 'sell' you ever had, old boy!" said Jack.

"Well," replied Ernie, "I said I should never forgive you Jack; and I do not think I ever shall. If Cora is only your cousin, and not your sister, I must say I think you were a vast deal too affectionate; and I should have knocked you down many a time had I only known. And you, darling," he added, turning to Cora—"what have you to say for deceiving me?"

"Only this," she whispered, hiding her face on his breast—"that I am sure that you love me for myself alone, and that as long as I live I can never regret having won my husband 'under false colors.'"

"What loses its flavor when we borrow it?" Wit.

## Answers to Correspondents.

Pay Your Power—Authors and others often send us letters and much of the material in these cases the Department have no means of payment, which we either have to pay, or to return to the author. The Department, however, will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore, in order to be sure of getting your material, it is always safer to send large packages by express.

We cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance of fiction or manuscripts in this